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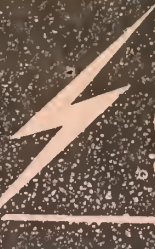
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# homemakers' chat

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U. S. DEPARTMENT  
OF AGRICULTURE



Friday, September 10, 1943.

Subject: "MAKING A WARTIME SPENDING PLAN." Information from home economists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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"Pay-as-you-go" tax deductions are leaving smaller sums in most family pay envelopes. Families are wondering how they can get along on what is left. But actually, if the government had not deducted your taxes, you would have had to set aside reserves for this purpose yourself. You are just as well off. So making a budget or spending plan this year will not differ much from other years, except for fewer luxuries, the home economists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture say. You want to safeguard the future, help the war effort, provide good nourishing food, and make your family life as satisfactory as possible.

You don't need to wait until the first of the year or any particular month to make a spending plan. You can start at once. If you kept a record of last year's expenses, it will guide you in making a new plan, although you can't expect to follow it exactly. If you have no records, estimate as nearly as you can. Let everyone in the family who is old enough to understand the figures have a voice in deciding what the family expenditures should include in the coming year. Try to give each child a fair personal allowance. The children will take more responsibility for making the spending plan work if they feel they share in setting it up and are allowed something to spend as they please.

In a spending plan you try to spread the year's income over all the different kinds of expenses for family living. Allot so much for food, for rent, for running the house, for clothes, medical care, personal use, and savings. After you arrive at an annual figure under each head, divide by twelve to see how much that group of expenses requires per month. When you start keeping track of

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outgo, sort the expenditures under these different heads, so you can compare what you actually paid out with what you planned to spend for each group. After a short trial period you may have to revise your estimates-- allow more for this, less for that.

Now let's imagine sitting with your family around the council table to work on a spending plan. Get some sheets of scratch paper to make rough estimates that you can alter as you go along.

Page one is your food estimate. It isn't easy to tell very far ahead what food will cost, but most homemakers have a general idea of what they spend each week for food.

Rent goes on the next page. If you own your home, you have extra expenses that are part of your housing cost, such as taxes, insurance or repairs. These also go on page 2.

Use page 3 to estimate how much it costs to run your home. Write down all those miscellaneous expenses like telephone, light, gas, coal or oil for heating, laundry, paid help, cleaning powders and soaps, bathroom supplies, new furnishings, or repairs to old ones, postage or express for the house.

Now you come to page 4-- that's for the family clothing. Make a column for each person in the family. Put down what each one needs and what it will cost. Don't forget to note when you'll have to buy various new articles.... maybe schoolclothes now for the girls....an overcoat in November for father....shoes for everybody about 3 times during the year.

Your fifth page is for medical needs---doctors, dentists, medicines and health or hospital insurance. Most families have to guess a little as to whether they will keep well all year. But you can resolve to keep medical costs low by providing the right foods to build up good resistance. And urge everybody to avoid needless **accidents**.



Page 6 is for a varied list of expenses. They are different in every family. Gifts to friends, church and charity, newspapers and books, carfare and all kinds of transportation, movies, hobbies and other amusements, smoking and personal grooming. Some families just consider all these expenses as personal. They allow a lump sum for each member of the household, suited to his or her age and activities. They don't try to have these personal expenses itemized or accounted for.

On sheet 7 you plan for regular family savings, insurance, war bonds. Life insurance is a form of saving.

You'll need still another page. Every family has certain large expenses that come up only once or twice a year. For example,-- next winter's coal--real estate taxes--college fees. Divide the total by twelve to see how much to reserve each month to meet them all on schedule.

The next step is to see how the total of the 8 pages you have worked out compares with your total annual income. If it comes to more than you expect to earn, you'll have to do some cutting. Let the children see what a problem it is to tailor these expenses to make ends meet. You own your own home. You can't move and cut down rent. How about clothing? Yes, that's one place where everyone may hold down expense a little, by wearing the same clothes a little longer, or wearing remodeled clothes. The family can agree to cut running expenses by using light and fuel more carefully, and by doing more work themselves instead of hiring someone to do it. Each one can trim personal expenses more or less. But don't try to cut down on the quality and nutritive value of food. One way to keep food bills lower is to buy less expensive foods that have the same food values as higher-priced ones. And fight food waste of every kind.

Now you are ready to make a monthly spending plan. Simply take one-twelfth of the annual total for each kind of expense. Choose one person to keep books, to avoid confusion and mistakes. Compare each month's spending for food, running expense and so forth, with the estimate for that item, and see if you have kept within your estimate. Family team-work will make the spending plan work.

